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Current Support Brief

NEW DEVELOPMENTS IN SOVIET MILITARY AID TO IRAQ



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W A R N I N G

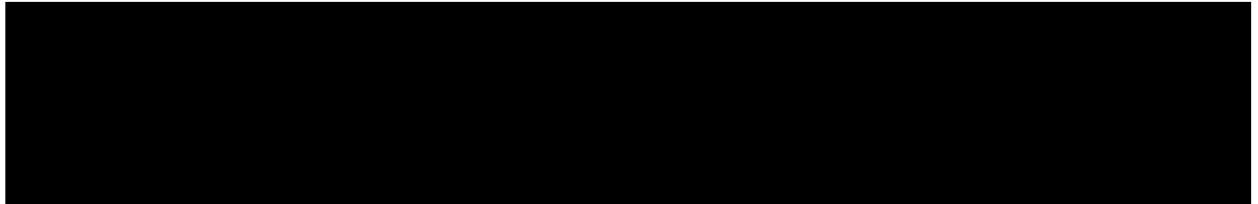
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NEW DEVELOPMENTS
IN SOVIET MILITARY AID TO IRAQ

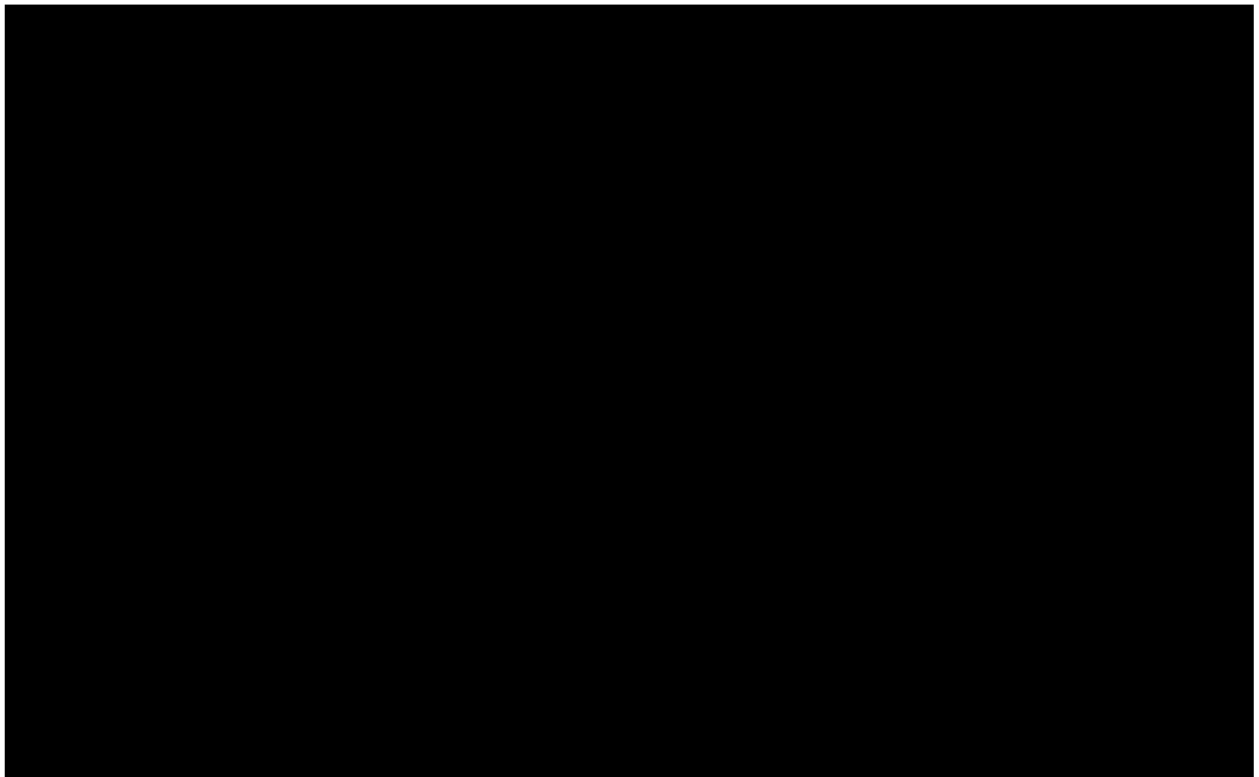
The USSR apparently has agreed to an Iraqi proposal to substitute additional aircraft and land armaments for the canceled surface-to-air missile (SAM) program. The new equipment reportedly includes MIG-21 jet fighters, tanks, armored cars, spare parts, and ammunition and will add to the sizable Iraqi arms inventory acquired under the Qasim regime. After a period of strained relations and a cessation of military deliveries following the Ba'athist overthrow of the Qasim regime, Soviet deliveries of military equipment resumed last September.

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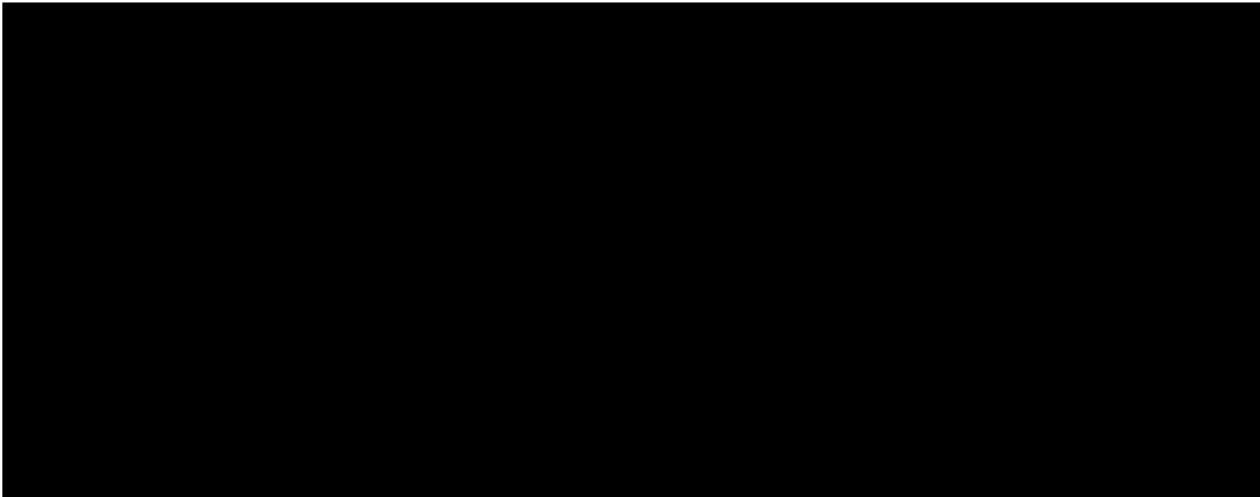


25X1B Barring any new agreement, annual payments by Iraq for its arms purchases should remain at about [REDACTED] through 1965. If a new agreement is signed, however, the repayment schedule may be revised.

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2. Earlier Strained Relations and Interruption of Deliveries

These developments point up a marked improvement in Soviet-Iraqi relations from the strained period following the overthrow of the Qasim regime on 8 February 1963. Following the coup, the severe repression of Iraqi Communists and a renewed offensive against the Kurdish minority by the new Ba'athist regime provoked a strong Soviet reaction, followed by counterpropaganda from the Iraqi side. A general review of Bloc-aided economic development plans was initiated by the Iraqi Government, a number of Bloc industrial projects were canceled, and alternative sources of military equipment were sought by Iraqi authorities. In addition to turning to non-Bloc countries for military items, the Iraqis sought to cancel an earlier commitment to accept Soviet SAM's.

The exacerbated Soviet-Iraqi relations resulted in a temporary cessation of military deliveries. For 3 months during the summer of 1963 the USSR denied specific Iraqi requests for military equipment, spares, and ammunition and delayed major items such as MIG-21 jet fighters and Mi-4 helicopters that were scheduled for delivery under previous contract arrangements.

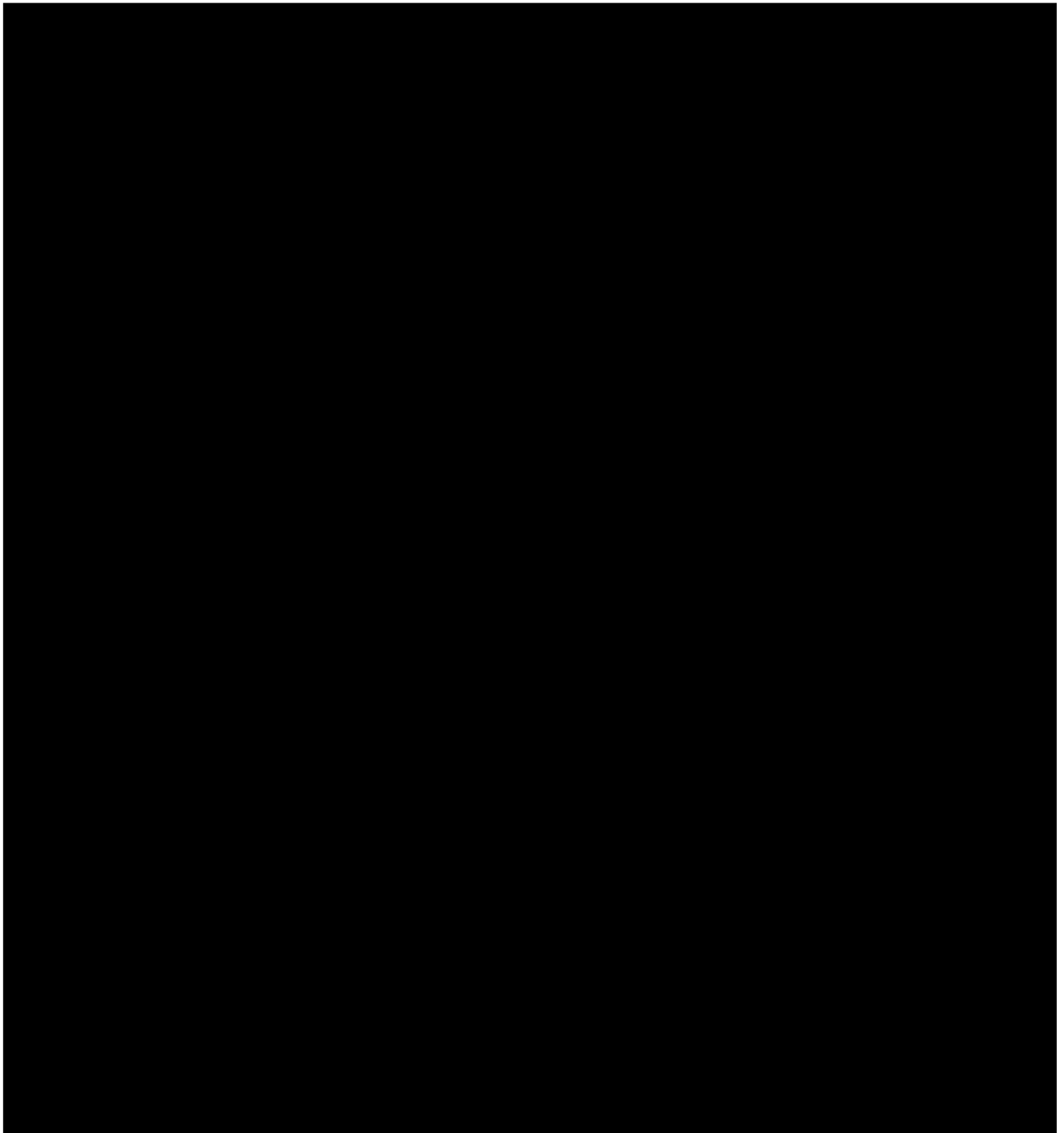
3. Improvement of Relations and Resumption of Deliveries

After relations had remained strained for several months, both sides apparently realized that each had much more to gain from an improvement in relations. Initiative for improving relations apparently came from the Iraqis, who already had a substantial built-in

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dependence on Bloc sources of supply for spare parts and ammunition of all types -- from aircraft rockets to small-arms cartridges -- and for maintenance and operational training of personnel to assure effective use of equipment.

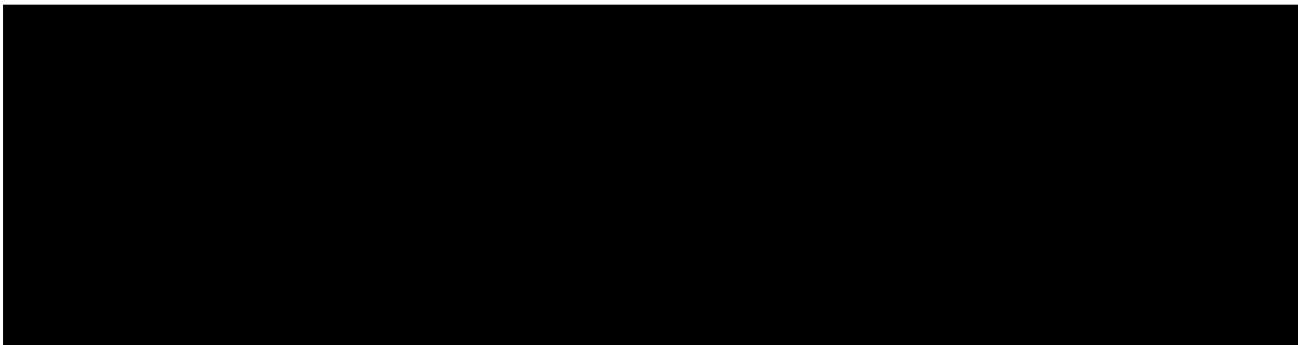
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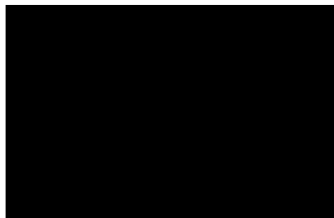
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Analyst:

Coord:



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